

West Berkshire Council

Birchwood

Inspection summary

CQC carried out an inspection of this care service on 29 September 2017 and 01 October 2017. This is a summary of what we found.

Overall rating for this service

Inadequate ●

Is the service safe?

Inadequate ●

Is the service effective?

Requires Improvement ●

Is the service caring?

Requires Improvement ●

Is the service responsive?

Inadequate ●

Is the service well-led?

Inadequate ●

This inspection was completed on 29th September and 1st October 2017, and was responsive in relation to a number of concerns and safeguarding issues received by the CQC.

The service was taken over by West Berkshire County Council on 1st June 2017, prior to which the care was provided by a corporate service provider. Some of the staff were transferred as part of the acquisition; however senior management within the service was lost.

Birchwood is a 60 bed service that provides facilities over three floors to older adults with varying needs. The ground floor provides a respite service for up to ten people undergoing an assessment period when transitioning from hospital or home and prior to an appropriate care package being sought. The first floor provides residential services to a maximum of 25 people. The second floor provides nursing care to a maximum of 25 people. People's needs varied depending on their diagnosis. We found some people required extensive support whilst others were able to complete some tasks independently.

A registered manager had been in post since the service was taken over by the local authority. A registered manager is a person who has registered with the Care Quality Commission to manage the service. Like registered providers, they are 'registered persons'. Registered persons have legal responsibility for meeting the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2008 and associated Regulations about how the service is run.

Notifications had not been made to the CQC for all incidents that were considered safeguarding alerts or reportable as a serious injury. This is a requirement of the registration regulations.

People were not kept safe. Risk assessments and comprehensive documentation was not in place to ensure people were offered responsive safe care and treatment. Care plans contained minimal information, often leaving out crucial information. For example, one care plan did not document how frequently a person required assistance with personal care. This meant they were at risk of their basic needs not being met and increased the potential of the person's skin being damaged.

Medicines were not managed safely. During a medicine round we observed the medicine trolley was left unlocked and unattended for a brief period of time. A person was witnessed approaching the trolley. MAR charts were completed and errors were noted. However guidelines had not been written for all people who were prescribed medicines to be taken 'as required'.

Fire safety checks were being completed and recorded. However people were not being kept safe at all times due to a failure in appropriate monitoring and recording of other health and safety checks. Not everyone living or staying at Birchwood had a current personal evacuation plan in place, although staff did have access to one page colour coded list that them who was independent and who needed assistance. Water temperatures checks were not being carried out as required, leading to concerns that staff would be unaware if a thermostatic valve stopped working, putting people at risk of scalding.

Staff did not appropriately record information. Incidents were not reported, and information was not accurately updated in daily records. We noted that one person had sores on both legs, without any dressings. Staff told us that dressings had been removed by the person. No alternative dressing had been applied. Records did not note that the person had sores on legs, what dressing should be applied or how the sores were to be managed.

Staff had not received supervision, or had a team meeting that allowed them to gain an understanding of the provider's values and vision since taking over.

Neither the provider nor the registered manager had effective systems in place to assess, monitor and improve the quality of the service. There was also no system to assess, monitor and mitigate risks to people using the service, their visitors and staff.

Staff generally were polite and respectful in their approach to people. However much of their role appeared to be task orientated. There were sufficient staff on duty who had received training to support them in their roles. However there were times of the day when staff deployment needed to be considered. The organisation of staff meant that they were not always effective and people's needs were not being met in a timely way and this, at times, left people unsafe.

During the inspection we identified several breaches of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014.

The overall rating for this provider is 'Inadequate'. This means that it has been placed into 'Special measures' by the CQC. The purpose of special measures is to:

- Ensure that providers found to be providing inadequate care significantly improve
- Provide a framework within which we use our enforcement powers in response to inadequate care and work with, or signpost to, other organisations in the system to ensure improvements are made.

- Services placed in special measures will be inspected again within six months.
- The service will be kept under review and if needed could be escalated to urgent enforcement action

You can ask your care service for the full report, or find it on our website at **www.cqc.org.uk** or by telephoning **03000 616161**